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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

With all the wonderful traditions that have blessed our lives, we pray, gracious God, that we will be more appreciative of the families who have nurtured us along the way and given us the very gift of life. For mothers and fathers, for grandparents and relatives, and for all those people who fostered our growth and looked to our care, we offer words of thanksgiving and gratitude. We recognize that as we give value to our family heritage and honor our own history, we strengthen our own lives and gain the power to share these same gifts with those who follow us. In Your holy name, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. MCINTYRE] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MCINTYRE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain 10 one-minutes on each side.

GOVERNMENT CANNOT BUILD PROSPERITY; ONLY FREE INDIVIDUALS CAN

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I often wonder if the other side has forgotten what motivated people from every corner of the globe to come to our shores throughout history. Indeed, the forefathers of the very same people who reflexively attack the idea of tax cuts as tax cuts for the rich came to America to escape government oppression, to escape the idea that government has a higher claim to the fruits of your labor than you and your family do.

America as a land of opportunity was not built into a rich and prosperous Nation by this way of thinking. In fact, America is a land of opportunity for reasons which are exactly the opposite of this way of thinking.

Government cannot build prosperity. Only free individuals can.

Americans became rich because free individuals had dreams, took risks, and worked hard to realize those dreams.

The other side might wish to remember that their rhetoric has absolutely nothing to do with making America more free, nothing to do with telling children to dream great dreams, and nothing to do with making a nation prosperous. It is very sad to see.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR PROVISION OF THE REVENUE RECONCILIATION ACT WOULD REDUCE AMERICAN WORKERS

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, our country is going through a major transition in employment relations. The

temporary help industry is exploding. Workers can no longer count on working for the same employer for their entire lives. Now is the time for Federal policy to promote a high-wage/high-skill economy which values workers and encourages employers to invest in the skills and long-term productivity of working people.

But the independent contractor provision in the Revenue Reconciliation Act would reclassify and misclassify American working people as independent contractors without wage and benefit guarantees, without unemployment or worker's compensation, without prevailing wage, minimum wage, without protections or equal employment protections. It would reduce American workers.

The last time we had a system like the independent contractor provision, we had an America that was filled with company stores. We are not going back to that era.

We have to value American workers, invest in them, and give them an opportunity to support their families with decent wages and to have decent benefits.

CUT TAXES FOR WORKING FAMILIES

(Mr. ROGAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, one of the most important debates that will occur during this Congress is whether this Congress will send more money back to the people who work for a living and earn that money. As one might expect, we are hearing both sides in this debate talking about tax cuts.

But let's look at the record. Republicans have controlled Congress for the last two Congresses. In each of those Congresses we have passed tax cuts for working men and women in this country.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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For 40 years before that, the other side controlled this Congress. When they began their reign in 1955, Americans paid about 10 percent of their income in taxes.

Today, thanks to their pattern of continuing tax increases, for the first time in American history the average family spends more in taxes than they spend for food, clothing, and shelter combined.

When we look at the record, this shows which party has real credibility on this issue. The other side fights tax cuts today by calling them tax cuts for the rich. Who are the so-called rich that the liberals refer to? They are talking about foundry workers, schoolteachers, machinists, and police on the beat. This is who they deem to be the rich. This is why they intend to deny tax cuts.

This has to end. We have to give people back more of the money they have earned, and give families the freedom to spend that money on their children. Republicans will end the wrong-headed practice of taking money from working families and sending it to Washington.

That day of financing every liberal wish list at the expense of working families will be over, Mr. Speaker, when the Republican tax cut takes effect.

FAIRNESS TO FARMERS

(Mr. MCINTYRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, today we will consider an issue of fairness to farmers who have invested for generations in their crops, and who for generations have fed their families, paid their bills, and put their kids through college when possible; farmers who, by the sweat of their brow on hot and humid days like today, are out there toiling in the sun; who suddenly might suffer a natural disaster at no fault of their own, as happened last year, when all eight counties in my district in southeastern North Carolina found that their crops were destroyed by hurricanes; small family farmers who should not bear the brunt of someone else's political agenda.

If we take away crop insurance from our tobacco farmers, we punish them for making an honest living from the soil of the Earth, we punish them by keeping them from getting bank loans, and we punish them again if disaster strikes. Do not do it. Do not take away their chance to make an honest living and be able to provide for their families.

THE GOP TAX BILL PROVIDES TAX RELIEF TO HARDWORKING MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, this is the end of the week. By now we have heard all the exhaustive cries of our liberal friends over here that the Republican tax bill provides tax cuts for the rich and, as they will have us believe, the rich do not deserve a tax break.

However, a close look at who they label as "rich" is very revealing. In fact, it reveals a tale of deception on every American worker. According to a recent independent study, the Democratic definition of rich is the total income of any household making more than \$56,200 a year. They contend, therefore, that 1.7 million union members are too rich to deserve tax cuts, 2.4 elementary and high school schoolteachers are too rich to deserve a tax cut, 8.1 million government workers, 4.2 million mechanics, repairmen, and construction workers, and the list goes on and on and on.

Mr. Speaker, the Democrats complain, and they claim that the only equitable way to provide tax relief to the American people is to allow those who pay no taxes to receive a bigger refund. Mr. Speaker, the Republican tax bill provides that much-needed tax relief to hardworking middle-class citizens of this country. I urge all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill.

ORDINARY HARDWORKING AMERICANS WILL RECEIVE NO TAX RELIEF THROUGH THE REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the Republican con games continue, convincing the American people they are getting a tax cut by giving a majority of the tax breaks to the richest people in America; complain that the Democrats are engaged in class warfare, while the Republicans practice it.

Yesterday I spoke about Al. He works in a factory, supports his wife and two kids on his \$25,000 salary, and he gets absolutely nothing from the Republican tax bill.

Today I want to tell Members about Mary. Mary is a single mom. She will struggle to raise two kids on her own. Mary works 40 hours a week as a secretary for \$12 an hour. That is a little less than \$25,000 a year. Mary works hard and pays thousands of dollars in taxes. What does Mary get under the Republican tax bill? Nothing. Zero. Zip.

What do Speaker GINGRICH and the Republicans say about Mary? They say Mary is on welfare. Huge tax breaks for millionaires, nothing for Mary, nothing for Al. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans should come clean with the American people and tell the truth.

PORKER OF THE WEEK AWARD

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, an investigation by the inspectors general of the Department of Health and Human Services found that a \$15.3 million training program based at the University of Mississippi, underwritten with Federal tax dollars, was only 8 percent effective. The goal of this program was to help participants earn the equivalent of a high school diploma, the GED.

Yet, for all the money spent, just 720 of the 4,300 participants even took the GED exam. Of those, only about half passed and went on to receive the GED diploma. The final price tag, now get this, for each GED diploma was \$40,584. That looks like the cost of a 4-year stay at a State-run college, rather than a remedial education effort.

Why do we keep spending tax dollars on feel-good programs that are not working? It appears these folks could use a little education in the arithmetic category. They simply are not making the grade. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services gets my Porker of the Week Award.

A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO REPLACING OUTDATED LIBRARY BOOKS

(Mr. BLAGOJEVICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, books have the power to bring the world to any child, but it is an obsolete world children see in 75 percent of the books in Chicago public school libraries.

Here is a sample of what students learn from many of these books. Russia is still part of the Soviet Union. The Berlin Wall is still standing. And some of these books boldly predict that one day man will actually walk on the Moon.

A recent study showed that 65 percent of the 100,000 public school libraries do not have adequate book collections. Recently the gentleman from Delaware [Mr. CASTLE] and I circulated a letter signed by 70 Members of Congress urging a strong new commitment to replacing outdated library books.

□ 1015

There is good news. Earlier this week a congressional subcommittee agreed to invest \$350 million to help public school libraries. That is an investment, Mr. Speaker, that will help take our public school libraries out of the dark ages and bring them back to the future.

DRUGS IN FLORIDA

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1